

HISTORY

Before addressing the issues raised in the Office actions in the related cases, a brief review of the procedural history of this case is provided to aid the Examiner during examination of the present application.

The Parent Application was filed on June 1, 2001, and was the subject of a Final Office action issued on April 24, 2003. Examination was reopened in response to applicants' filing of a request for continued examination on September 24, 2003, and the outstanding office action was issued on November 6, 2003. At this time, applicants would like to address issues presented in the outstanding office action in an effort to expedite prosecution of the present application.

ISSUES PRESENTED

The outstanding Office action issued during the pendency of the Parent Application set forth several grounds for rejection of the claims therein. The first such rejection explains that claims 1-6, 8, 11-12, 21 and 24-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,991,827 to Taylor. Taylor is cited in the Office action as disclosing a spring including a fiber reinforced core made from reinforcing fiber tows impregnated with a resin and twisted about a longitudinal axis. The spring of Taylor is also said to include an outer layer of resin that is devoid of fiber tows.

The Office action notes that Taylor fails to disclose that the outer layer is formed by twisting a bundle of fibers to squeeze resin from the core, however, the process limitations were deemed irrelevant for purposes of patentability under M.P.E.P. §2113.

Claim 1 was also rejected as being anticipated, or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 4,473,217 to Hashimoto. Hashimoto is cited as teaching a spring including a fiber reinforced core made from reinforcing fiber tows impregnated with a resin and twisted about a longitudinal axis. The spring according to Hashimoto is also said to inherently disclose an outer layer of resin that is devoid of fiber tows and formed by twisting the bundle of fibers to squeeze resin from the core. It is noted in the Office action that Hashimoto fails to discuss the